



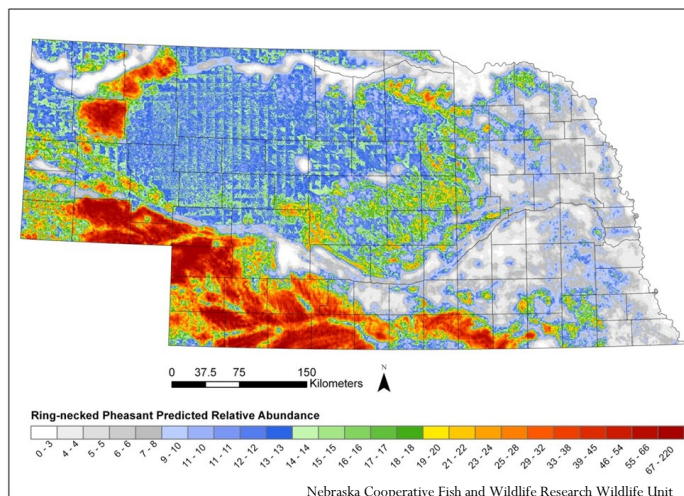
February 2013

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Pheasants Model Distribution Map

A habitat based distribution map for Ring-necked Pheasant was recently completed by researchers from the Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture. Based on nearly 3000 surveys, this map identifies the landscapes most capable for maintaining pheasant populations in Nebraska with the goal of helping managers and policy makers direct future conservation efforts. From 2010-2012 surveys were conducted in 17 counties across Nebraska and information about the vegetation and land-use practices surrounding each location were used to identify suitable habitat conditions for pheasants. Not surprisingly, pheasants are strongly associated with lands enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), but the benefits of CRP are not universal. The vegetation and agricultural practices surrounding a CRP field play a critical role in determining pheasant populations. While small grains (i.e., winter wheat and milo) in the surrounding landscape appear to add value to CRP habitats, large trees significantly limit the benefits of CRP for pheasants. Although not capable of predicating the exact number of pheasants in any location from year to year, this map represents a first attempt at understanding what drives pheasant populations in Nebraska. Using this information, researchers are now developing tools to help understand how policy changes and management actions will affect pheasant populations in the future. For more information on this project please feel free to read "[Assessing Local and Landscape Constraints on Habitat Management for Grassland and Upland Birds](#)" available online through the University of Nebraska Digital Commons.



Spotlight

Nebraska Pheasants Forever starts Facebook page

Click on the below link.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Nebraska-Pheasants-Forever/346698792080760?ref=ts&fref=ts>

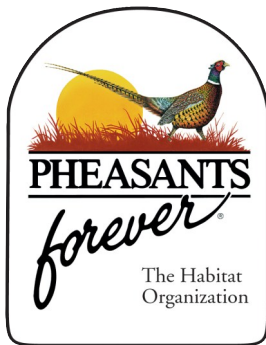
Southwest FOP

The Southwest FOP area receives an award at the Pheasants Forever State Habitat Meeting. The Southwest Focus on Pheasants, formed in 2010 to improve pheasant hunting by creating more and better habitat, encompasses more than 950,000 acres in Hitchcock, Hayes, Frontier and Red Willow counties. It has impacted more than 15,000 acres.

The key partners include NGPC, PF, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency,

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cooperative Research Unit, UNL Extension Service, landowners and volunteers.





Onebox FOP

The drought of 2012 affected wildlife across the state of Nebraska in many ways, especially some of the Focus on Pheasants areas. The USDA opened up CRP to emergency haying and grazing to help farmers and ranchers in need of livestock feed. The removal of CRP cover can hurt wildlife in the short term, but in Custer County the One Box FOP is working with landowners to help make the haying and grazing a positive for upland birds in the long run.

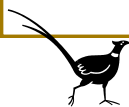
FOP incentives have also been used to promote and take advantage of available conservation programs that pay farmers to plant marginal dry land crop fields back to native grasses and wildflowers. The drought showed the vulnerability of areas such as pivot corners, which struggled to produce any crops this season. The One Box drills were again busy dormant seeding new plantings this fall.



Branched Oak WMA FOP

The drought of 2012 affected much of the habitat manipulations on Branched Oak WMA this past season. Field staff spent approximately 6 days clearing cedars and other invasive trees in major drainages along the south boundary. During late October field staff and two local job shadow students seeded locally collected acorns of oak tree species around some of the cleared drainages. Native grass and forb seed was collected by hand and machine for future seedings.

Firebreak construction occurred for winter and spring burning during October. Contractors spent around 26 hours in tree clearing on various tracts and lease trades resulted in 32 acres of hayed brome tracts being sprayed with glyphosate during November. During December additional tree clearing by field staff occurred in units around the WMA.



Please visit the Focus on Pheasants website to learn more:
www.FocusonPheasants.org

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